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PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *County Contracts Indigent Defense*

On June 10, 2013, the Lubbock County Commissioners Court approved a new agreement with the Lubbock Private Defender Office to provide legal representation for indigent individuals accused of crimes in Lubbock County.

The County originally contracted with the Lubbock Private Defender Office in September 2011, but after a year in operation, both parties agreed that the contract needed some modifications. *"Like any new program, we had some kinks to work out over this past year. Overall, in my opinion, this new office has served the County well. That being said, we all evaluated where we were and agreed to begin negotiations to develop a contract that was more relevant to both parties, and a model for other Counties across the State,"* according to Director of Court Administration, Dean Stanzione.

Prior to entering into the Agreement in 2011, multiple Lubbock County departments and judges were responsible for assigning counsel, approving vouchers, monitoring attorney performance, and distributing compensation to attorneys who provided such representation.

Executive Director of the Texas Indigent Defense Commission in Austin, Jim Bethke, says this new system *"helps to realize one of the most important aspects of the American Bar Association's Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System: the selection, funding and payment of defense attorneys is independent of the judiciary."*

The Agreement contracts indigent defense services to a third-party without "growing government" through the creation of a public defender's office. It has allowed the Lubbock Criminal Defense Lawyers Association to take ownership in indigent defense for Lubbock County, and to do so in a way far better than previously done in Lubbock County. Commissioner Bill McCay says, *"Representation for indigent individuals is not going to go away, so why not improve indigent defense and do so in the most efficient way possible. I believe this is what the program has offered Lubbock County, its taxpayers, and those needing legal representation."*

Bethke concludes, *"Because Lubbock County is at the forefront of this innovative approach to indigent defense, the reflection and efforts to continually develop and improve this new system are invaluable."*

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For information or questions, please contact Dean Stanzione, Director of Court Administration, at dstanzione@co.lubbock.tx.us or 806.775.1987.

To contact a representative for the Lubbock Private Defender's Office, contact Ted Hogan at 806.763.7925 or George Nelson at 806.749.0007